

# *The Midland*

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## **Four Poems**

By WILLARD WATTLES

### **EVOE!**

I am athirst with love of the wide world,  
Day and night are handles to my cup,  
The stars shine clear upon time's silver chalice,  
I cannot drink it up.

I have looked deep within the shining crystal,  
I have touched brims with many jovial sins,  
Night has set seal upon the lips of singing —  
Then a new song begins.

New suns arise and old sweet friendships perish.  
Who would keep wine when it has ceased to sting?  
Broach a new cask and raise the bitter chorus,  
I'll beat time staggering.

## TWO SONNETS ON DEATH

## I

We do not surely die, — the body's clay  
Dissolves again into the moistened clod  
From whence there clammers, reaching unto God,  
The self-same substance in a different way;  
The dew-fired grass is cropped by hungry kine,  
The heifer slain, and in the limbs of men  
Lithe muscles swell, then melt to clay again;  
Immutable in change the germ divine.  
And though in thy dear eyes the love-lights fade,  
And withered are the roses of thy face  
While yet remains the mem'ry of thy grace  
Within my lonely heart, all unafraid  
I close thy weary eyes, for this I know,  
Thou art not dead when I can love thee so.

## II

At first it seemed we could not grow to miss  
The daily benediction of his face;  
Upon our lips still lies his farewell kiss,  
Though he is not in his accustomed place.  
The firm, fine mouth, the keen, untroubled eye,  
The voice of manhood, tender yet and strong,  
His soul's white taper flaming steadily  
In that dark shadow we had feared so long,  
They have not vanished. Nay, he still is here;  
The body passing leaves the soul behind;

In God's great mercy is no room for fear;  
He has not left us — only, we are blind;  
We do not see him, touch him as we might  
Who sits beside our embered hearth to-night.

## REQUIEM

One golden coin is glimmering within a silken mesh,  
And there are favors sweet to buy, full precious to a  
    roving eye,  
Red, luscious lips that satisfy, and often, too, refresh.

The road I take is somewhat rough and inns are far  
    apart  
Where one can stop to toast his shins and try the  
    landlord's dusty bins  
And other solaces of inns that buoy up the heart.

I'd like to fling my golden coin. 'Twould make a  
    goodly clatter;  
For other men have less to spend, who make the  
    supple landlord bend  
And bring his most uproarious blend upon a reeling  
    platter.

And there are curtained rooms above where linen  
    fair is gleaming  
All lovely sweet with lavender where soft the flicker-  
    ing lamp on her

Sets half-forgotten dreams astir and all my pulses  
streaming.

One golden coin to weigh and fling upon the land-  
lord's table;  
For other men have passed this way and lived and  
loved their little day  
Until the rafters shook and they set night aflame  
with Babel.

What shall I buy me with my gold one-half so sweet  
as wine,  
Or goodlier than comradeship, or tenderer than  
woman's lip,  
Or strong to hold as hands that slip and weld them-  
selves with mine?

The lordly lovers laugh at one who spends his coin  
in song:  
No song, they say, can keep from harm within the  
bulwark of love's arm  
The happy bodies snug and warm, encircled close  
and strong.

Oh, right are they to laugh at me, who barter for a  
reed  
To play a little bag-pipe air, when love so wonder-  
fully fair  
Is waiting for me everywhere, and yet I will not  
heed.



With a golden coin I buy a pipe, and I wander where  
I will,  
Yet never another ear has known its comforting perfect undertone,  
Till I am not lonely when alone, though the voice is small and still.

Oh, it's little I care that the road be rough—it is not rough for me;  
For I am a piper mad as May, who have no time in inns to stay,  
But tickle at death with a roundelay till he spread his sheet for me.

And who shall sleep as snug and warm when done with wandering,  
Snug and warm in a fairer bed than ever mine host for a lover spread  
When I couch with the mighty placid dead, level with pope and king.

Yet, when I lie with emperors in crowned and sceptered rest,  
I care not what the years may bring, if ye but take this childish thing,  
A little pipe on which to sing, and lay it on my breast.

## I DO NOT LOVE MY LOVE BECAUSE . . .

I do not love my love because  
    She yields herself completely,  
But more because the thing she yields  
    She can deny as sweetly.

I do not love my love for love,  
    But only that in this  
When she withdraws she comes to me,  
    Her absence is her kiss.

I never am away from her  
    No matter where I go,  
For in my very feet she walks  
    A way that lovers know.

And should the blinding light burst through  
    My body's broken shell,  
Her glance untroubled would appraise  
    The seeming miracle,

And I should find her in that sleep —  
    The pillow and the bed —  
While folk less subtle, hat in hand,  
    Would pity me as dead.

## Brothers

By HAROLD CRAWFORD STEARNS

My brother wandered far and wide  
To find the rainbow's end,  
While I stayed home till Father died  
To run the farm and half-pretend  
I loved the work — the long hot days  
In meadow, ditch and dyke,  
The winter months beside the blaze,  
An exile from the things I like.

And after Father died I stayed  
Because a farm is sure —  
As sure, in fact, as some dull trade  
That moulds a man a silly boor.  
The farm, through diligence, has paid,  
And I am satisfied . . .  
Sometime my brother's dreams will fade,  
And show him how a rainbow lied.

He lives a year in old Cathay,  
A year in Wales or France.  
I read his letters day by day  
And in the cornfield weave romance,  
Lest I should be a loutish thing  
When he comes home again  
To tell me stories, and to bring  
A whiff from lands beyond my ken.

I know today what I shall do:  
Hitch up the buckboard team  
And meet the train at half-past two  
That stops an hour to get up steam.  
My brother, in his careless way,  
Will pile his bags on me,  
Then clamber to my side and say,  
"You haven't changed, as I can see."

While he is hunting I shall work,  
But when the night-time falls  
He'll spin me tales of Kurd and Turk,  
Of French chateaux and Chinese walls.  
And I shall smile, and listen well,  
And ask him so-and-so. . . .  
Oh, I shall never have to tell,  
And he will never have to know.

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### **Song in October**

By RUTH SUCKOW

Heart, as shiningly wear your grief  
As frost upon the lilac leaf,  
As mist along the stubble rye,  
As silver rain across the sky.

## Linwood

By RAYMOND WEEKS

### I. HOW I BURNED FOR HÉLOÏSE

Héloïse Jenkins! cruel little blond of seven years! Hands that I could almost have crushed in mine, if I had dared, hair that had to be curled every morning, pale, blinking eyes, one of them slightly crossed, a face covered with freckles, a voice like that of an emaciated flute, very small ears, legs disastrously long (only she didn't know it), large, horny feet, — she had all of these defects and many more, yet she seemed perfectly happy and ruled over me like a second Cleopatra. And this, in spite of the fact that I disliked her, that I felt myself more moral, more intelligent, more interesting, handsomer, better constructed. I was convinced, too, of Héloïse's fundamental immorality, for she told fibs with unconstrained pleasure, stole — and forced me to steal — cakes, buns, cookies, puddings, loaves of bread, candy, nuts, raisins, dried currants, peaches, apricots, apples, melons, potatoes, pies. She used to plunge her hand into my pocket and abstract marbles and other property, while fixing me with a hypnotic eye. She slapped my face in season and out. In short, she conducted herself in a manner which would have driven to despair a less resolute spirit than mine. And she was profane! I know this, because it was from her that I learned to swear.

Héloïse had a sliding scale of oaths, which she practiced when she had nothing else to do. It was like a five-finger exercise. When an isolated oath slipped from between her teeth, it made me jump as if a pistol had been fired behind my back. I never became hardened to her oaths, although I acquired some of them in butter-milk form.

Do not suppose that I was unaware whither Héloïse was leading me! I had not gone to Sunday school and church in vain; and then, besides, I was blessed with a brother and two sisters who passed in the village as unperfectable models. I felt a gulf growing between them and me, and I knew what the name of that gulf was. To sit at table with three saints and mama and papa, to realize that one was a smiling little devil, bound straight for where Lazarus did not go, Oh! this was worse than playing with Héloïse! I often retired to a clump of lilacs in the yard or behind the stable to labor with myself. How well I understood history! How I wept with Adam, for I now saw that all the misfortunes of the world *could* come through a woman. And Solomon! He seemed to me a brother. Biblical texts swam before my disordered vision. They became terribly luminous. Sometimes they seemed to depict so ominously my ruined life that I sobbed aloud: "There is no salt in Israel!" I knew a score of texts which fitted Héloïse like a glove, such as: "Let not a witch live", or: "This kind cometh not forth without prayer and fasting." Yes! she was a witch, but how could I stone or burn her, when she always kept

one of her rattlesnake eyes glued to me? I prayed and fasted, but nothing came forth, and Héloïse trounced me harder than ever.

At this crisis in my career, there came to our village a bald-headed evangelist, who drenched us all in tears of repentance,—all except Héloïse, of course. Nothing ever touched her. He commenced his sermons by raking the women with the fire of hell. With what emotion did I listen to sermons whose texts, as I remember them, ran like this: "As for my people, children are their oppressors and women rule over them"; "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"; "Womankind is rash and foolhardy, and their covetousness is like the gulf of hell"; "And he cast out seven devils from Mary Magdalene" (the orator explained that the seven devils had not been removed from other women). Among illuminating comparisons which I still recall was one that fascinated me: "Woman," he said, "is like the serpent named dipsade, whose bite leaves a mortal thirst." My enthusiasm increased. I did not miss a sermon. "When I grow up," I thought, "I shall be an evangelist, just like him, yes! even to being bald, and I shall save the world!" My family augured favorably of my future. And then, presto: if the traveling evangelist didn't change his batteries! He attacked the noble sex. He loosed upon us all the vials of the Old and New Testament. He spared us not at all. He reduced us to slimy pulp. He blew us to Salamanca and back. And all of this with diabolical eloquence. When he preached his

final sermon, mine were the only dry eyes in the church. His text was: "Men, love your wives and be not bitter toward them." I rebelled. I was bitter, I was eternally bitter toward Héloïse, and no itinerant preacher was going to budge me!

But I am wandering!

Héloïse and I still played together, about and through and over and upon and across the yard, not unlike two cannon balls chained together, and most of the chain was on me.

During subsequent periods of servitude, I have studied this, the first period of my subjection to woman, and I explain Héloïse's influence over me in the following manner: it was the result of two causes: first, her glassy, crossed eye; second, the aureole which her father's prodigious reputation spun about her head.

To be sure, he was only the prescription clerk in the drug store, but he was none the less one of the stupendous figures in village life. He enjoyed the reputation of being the most wonderful reciter of terrifying poems within five hundred miles. I have since learned that most of these poems were old English and Scotch ballads. Scores of times I heard him recite ballads of fair Rosymonde, of Thomas and Ellender, Sir Gwain, Pat Rickspense, Diveeze and Lazarus, the Bailiff's Daughter of Islingtown, Bellow me Babe, Edward Hedward, LucyAnne Colin (so-called doubtless because Colin belonged to LucyAnne), Margaret's Ghost, and Barbery Allin. It was astonishing the amount of suffering, fighting, stab-



bing, loving, sighing, and dying in Mr. Jenkins' collection. Nearly everybody died, even the bad people. These tales supplemented beautifully my rich stock of ghost stories, therefore I felt that they must be true and loved them accordingly. When of an evening or, more rarely, of a Sunday afternoon, I heard Mr. Jenkins practicing, I slipped behind the large clump of lilacs near the fence and listened entranced! I did more than this: without any intention on my part, I learned by heart whole sections of his repertory. Who knows? In time I might have become his rival or his successor, if he had not finally removed to the other side of the village, thus cutting short my education.

"But," you will say, "how can a boy of seven have understood those ballads?" O doltish reader! You show that you understand neither ballads nor babes! Of course, there were many words that escaped me, that I interpreted in a way to make you smile, but is not poetry great in proportion as it is obscure? Where have you been all these years? Have you learned nothing since the captivity of Israel? When one knows all of a thing, as you do, he has become incapable of pure literary enjoyment. Become a child again, or keep your infamous opinions to yourself! Yes! I am proud to say that there were scores of words which I failed to understand, but a child at such moments, even while suffering gobs of emotion, preserves an inspirational lucidity, of which you, O critic, are innocent! He defines luminously, poetically, the obscure words, carries on



He was a large, florid man and rather bald. It required only an instant for his eyes, countenance, and figure to assume the proper aspect of guilt or suffering innocence. He could freeze his audience with terror in three seconds. As he acted out the story, the women wept, the men coughed, the children sobbed. Before commencing a ballad, Mr. Jenkins hissed out the title from between his teeth, in a noble aside. I can see him now in one of his famous ballads, whose title he gave as "Edward Hedward". He came slinking into the room, armed with a cane. The ladies and we children shivered. He advanced slowly, turned his head nobly to one side, hissed "Edward Hedward", and, as nearly as I recall the story, he said — but this I will tell some other time.

One beautiful Sunday I returned from church and Sunday School in a pleasant mood, for at church they had sung one of my favorite hymns, the one about the cross-eyed bear, while at Sunday School I had marched from triumph to triumph in replying to such questions as "Where is Jerusalem?" "At what age did Moses die?" "How many times was Jacob married and why?" "What did Joshua do to the sun and moon?" "Where did Ruth glean and why?"

Dinner not being ready, I went out into the yard, and there I saw Héloïse on the other side of the fence. She was dressed entirely in white. She beckoned her slave to a place in the fence where two pickets had warped asunder. She stuck her impudent features through the opening, fixed me with

her eye, and Cleopatra lived again. A cork-screw curl blew across her nose from time to time. She commenced in her usual style:

"Come here, you Egyptian idolator! you mangy cat! you moon-faced shrimp! If you say the word, I'll crawl under the fence and mop up the garden with you!"

Mark Antony remained silent. He did not know what a shrimp was. He felt embarrassed. She continued after a moment:

"You piece of dough! I'm tempted to come right over and chew your ears off!"

I suffered from this added insult, but not because its metaphor was mixed: I had understood perfectly what she meant. And then she spoke winged words which I did not understand, but which none the less made me feel the depths of female scorn:

"You ain't no true knight!"

The only thing for me to do was to deny the allegation. I did so:

"I am!"

"You ain't!"

"I am!"

"You ain't! If you was, you'd burn for me! So there!"

By sheer female genius she had driven me into a corner. To what dangers we men are exposed! How frail is human happiness! how like unto grass cast into the oven! Only three minutes ago, I had been free and happy! Now, after having been cruelly humiliated, I stood condemned to burn some-

thing! What was a true knight supposed to burn? The house? I glanced at it. Burn our house? Impossible, not even for the Queen of Sheba, not even for Cleopatra! The stable? Perhaps. The woodshed? the chicken coop? Perhaps. Héloïse continued to fix me with her implacable eye.

"I will burn for you."

"When?"

"Whenever you please."

"What'll you burn?"

"The stable."

"All right! I'll see if you're a true knight!"

Then our dinner bell! As I walked toward the house, there shone about me the same soft sunlight as half an hour before, yet what a difference! Have you ever, my reader, seen the peace of your life disappear in the twinkling of an eye? The small boy who entered the house and sat down at table bore on his shoulders the weight of Mt. Sinai. O succulent roast, O new potatoes, O radishes, O doughnuts, O dumplings, what could you say to me now!

After dinner, the small boy passed through the kitchen, put some matches into his pocket, and walked slowly toward the stable. To burn or not to burn, that was the question. He had always been taught to keep his promise: he had promised! He entered the dark, cool stable. The horses and the cow were in Cook's pasture. Again the terrible struggle. Should he do the deed? He stepped out into the sunlight, still undecided. He saw at an upper window of the Jenkins house the pitiless face

of Héloïse. She was watching the stable, she was watching! She was the audience, the public, the Greek chorus. She was all the Hebrew prophets, she was posterity.

The small boy slipped back into the stable, climbed into a manger, struck a match and set fire to the hay and stubble. He leaped out of the manger, his face full of smoke. In an instant he recognized that he had committed a crime, that Eve had again been active. He rushed out of doors, filled his lungs with air to cry "fire!", but could not. No! he would extinguish the fire himself or he would perish! The whole manger was burning. The flames would soon reach the hay in the loft. He saw in the glare a bucket partly filled with water. It was heavy, but not for his arms. He threw the water on the fire, seized a horse blanket which was hanging in the stall, and climbed into the manger to do or die. Oh! the flames! the smoke! At one moment, it seemed that he must give up and let himself sink down; then he thought of the blue birds and their nest of young ones in the box on top of the stable, and his fury saved him. When the fire was at last put out, the boy had lost his eye-lashes, eye-brows, and the hair below the circle formed by his round felt hat. His face and hands were covered with blisters. He ran to the well and pumped a full bucket of water to make doubly sure that no spark remained. Then came a tempest of sobs and tears. He crawled into the cool cornerib and passed there the interminable hours of the afternoon. Oh! the burning of his skin,

the pain in his swollen eyes and in his breast! Oh! the shame, the humiliation! If he could only die! and through his sobs ran the names "mama! papa!" Finally, after what seemed to him years, he knew that the sun was setting. Would it ever be dark enough for such a badly singed boy to reach his room unseen? If there were only some friend, to break the news! And then he thought of good Mr. Queste.

Mr. Queste was a kindhearted old Frenchman whose cow the small boy often drove up from Cook's pasture. Thus it was that a half hour later, Mr. Queste smilingly held the back gate open for Belle and her singed companion. The boy at first tried to smile as usual, then threw himself sobbing into the old man's arms. Oh! how gentle, how kind he was! How he held the boy! how he hushed him with his quaint speech! Then motherly Mrs. Queste came, and the boy's crying commenced all over again. Little by little, they got the story from him. The old people looked at each other and exchanged a few words in French.

"Do you know what my wife is saying?" inquired Mr. Queste. "She says that you are a hero, and you are!"

"What is a hero?"

"A hero is a brave man who does his duty at any cost. But, come! Let's milk Belle, then we will take you home and tell your papa and mama that you are a hero."

Mrs. Queste had run to the house. She returned, bringing a cup of cream, some flour, and some cloths.

In a moment she dressed my burns. She talked to me all the time in the most charming manner, and convinced me that my complexion and hair would be all the prettier for the singing. As they led me home through the friendly darkness, I inquired:

"Mr. Queste, is a hero more than a knight?"

"Seven thousand times more! Every hero is a knight, with lots of things thrown in."

My sponsors found no difficulty in convincing my family that I was both a hero and a knight, but this did me no good in the eyes of Héloïse. In her estimation, I had sunk too low for contempt. No man ever fell further, swifter, and harder than I did in her opinion. "Singed cat" became my name, and calls of "Kitty! Kitty! Kitty!" could be heard twenty times a day from across the border. Then the unexpected happened. The Jenkins family removed to the other side of the village. I saw Héloïse climb to the top of the last load of furniture, and seat herself in an arm chair. She was sucking a large stick of striped candy.

"Good-bye, little shrimp! Good-bye, Kitty," she called almost graciously. "Come down to see me, so that I can kick you around!" Then, as the wagon started:

"Good-bye, Kitty!"

"Good-bye, Héloïse!"



## II. SAWBUTTEE

"Come, Sawbuttee, come, Sawbuttee" called the sweet voice of Aunt Polly, with the indescribable break or quaver that you may have noticed in the voices of some lovable women. How well that gentle voice expressed the character of the gray haired woman who stood calling by the pasture bars: "Sawbuttee! Sawbuttee! Sawbuttee! Sawbuttee!" she called in a sort of cadence, and then was heard a crashing of branches among the pawpaws and alders in the bottom lands of the creek, and in a few moments a pretty, dark red cow with white trimmings came jumping and plunging out of the thicket.

It was sunset, that is, milking time, in Linwood.

Suddenly, from the other side of the valley came the husky rasping of an old man's voice: "Hey! Sawbuttee! Hey! Sawbuttee! Sawbuttee! Sawbuttee!" It was Mr. Daniel Dudley — Col. Dudley, if you please — calling his mule. Just why Mr. Dudley should call his mule, one would have found it difficult to tell. In the first place, the mule Sawbuttee had never been known to pay the slightest attention to his master's call. In the second place, he found plenty to eat and drink in his succulent pasture. Then, again, the name by which he had been raised was Jim. Two years ago his name had been changed, a result of the bitter dissension which divided all Linwood into two camps. The dispute had spread even to the adjoining districts. Seven Oaks was divided into hostile groups, as was Goose Neck

and the region beyond the Blue River. This was the question: was Sawbuttee the name of a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, a male or a female?

This is how the trouble originated.

An itinerant elocutionist from Red Oak, Iowa, had given an entertainment — for money of course — at the Linwood school house. A fair sized audience heard him. Some of the "numbers" were sung, but most were recited. From having heard Mr. Bompus for five consecutive seasons, I am able to remember at this late date some of his titles, such as "Curfew shall not ring to-night", "Polly Vaughan", "Devilish Mary", "The Boy and the Bumble Bee", "Seymour Wilson", "The Turk in his guarded Tent", "Beauchamp's Confession", "We have Met and We have Parted", "Thomas and fair Ellender", "The Maid of Prairie du Chien", "The Woman and the Devil", and — finally — "The Boy stood on the Burning Deck" or "Sawbuttee", as it became known among us:

The boy stood on the burning deck  
When Sawbuttee had fled.

Who was Sawbuttee? What was Sawbuttee, a man, a woman, a boy or a girl? That was the question! There are communities, reposing in the lap of ease, to which this question would have been one of sovereign indifference. Not so Linwood! It was too noble, too eager to know the truth, too scrupulous in its historical fidelity! Linwood was too honest! It was all fish or all fowl. No compromise was ever possible for Linwood.

It is sometimes possible to tell where a revolution started, but ours seemed to break out everywhere. The trouble commenced on the way home. In at least a dozen families there was found to be disagreement as to the sex of Sawbuttee. Mr. Mahaffy, for example, said to his wife as he drove home: "That miserable scoundrel Sawbuttee ought to have been shot!"

Whereupon Sally Mahaffy, surprised, answered: "Why! Sawbuttee wasn't a man; she was the captain's daughter!"

"Captain's daughter, nonsense!"

"Well! you'll see; she was the captain's daughter!"

There you have it!

To *see*!; in a score of families they would have given much to *see*, but how could they? Mr. Bompus had already started for Goose Neck and Independence. A letter was despatched to him at Red Oak, Iowa, but no reply came. Meanwhile, the situation was becoming more and more strained at Linwood. Nearly everyone except Mr. McDaniels, the schoolmaster, took sides. At first there was little acrimony, but toward spring real animosities had developed. Matters quieted down in the summer, only to blaze up in the late fall. Mr. Bompus had been invited to a return engagement for the winter. His daughter had written accepting.

The December night of his second appearance was long remembered in Linwood. The little school house was jammed full. When as his last number he

recited "Sawbuttee", one could have heard a mouse cough under the floor. There was not much applause; we were too deeply moved. Mr. Bompus seemed to understand, and repeated, without being asked, the entire poem:

The boy stood on the burning deck  
When Sawbuttee had fled.

"Who was Sawbuttee?" someone inquired. Mr. Bompus did not know, but promised to try to find out before his next appearance. There we were, left in suspense for another year!

What a year that was! The cleavage ran deeper and deeper through the community. Neighbors ceased to speak, families were all but disrupted, marriage engagements counted as mere straws! Even we children at school took sides, and for the second time perhaps Sawbuttee caused the effusion of blood.

Mr. Bompus returned for five consecutive seasons, but he never knew or never would tell who and what Sawbuttee was. Then came a tearful letter from his daughter announcing his death. Alas! we should never know! By this time, the country side was full of cats, dogs, ducks, chickens, cows, mules, children, and even tame crows, who, irrespective of sex, were named Sawbuttee. That is why the loud calling of this name of a still evening occasioned a multitudinous start all over Linwood. And that is why to-night an old man, in a populous town, sitting alone with memory, smiles a tearful smile which no

mortal eye shall behold. . . It is again sunset in far-off Linwood. He sees the golden haze over the country, and, by the pasture bars, a gray haired woman with a face of gentle and tender kindness. He hears her call, and then below in the little valley a crashing of branches and leaves. . . .

### III. WHERE IS TENNESSEE?

Mr. Daddy — I never knew any other name for him — was the happiest man in the world.

The reasons for this were not hard to see.

In the first place, he rented a little farm on the sunny side of nowhere, about half a mile from our house. You have rarely seen a more restful habitation. The tumble down cabin, the barn that had been, the hay stacks and piles of straw, all looked to the south with genial and engaging cordiality. To own such a farm would have made Mr. Daddy unhappy. To rent it, left him a king.

In the second place, Mr. Daddy's wife was the jolliest, rosiest, most even-tempered woman in seven counties. A simple "Good morning!", called by her to a passerby as she stood bare-armed on her thresh-old, was better than presenting him a peach cobbler or a pumpkin pie. Never in all my wanderings have I seen her equal.

In the third place, Mr. Daddy possessed what we children knew to be a slice right out of heaven, in the person of more than eight devoted dogs. I know that there were more than eight, because I could only count that far, and when I had counted with

difficulty eight rolling, rollicking dogs, mostly pups, there remained plenty of uncounted tails wagging about. And such dogs! Not the degenerate counterfeits which one sees in cities, but dogs that were dogs! They were polite, genial, loving, and loyal. To caress their silky, floppety ears was a delight. They had sufficient hound blood in them to render them perfect. They varied somewhat in color, just enough to rest the eye. Their voices sounded sweeter to me than the tinkling cymbals about which the preacher talked. It was an education in sound morals to play with them, to look into their kindly eyes and open, generous countenances, full of the most delicate emotions. Think of possessing more than eight of these magnificent animals, and of having them worship the ground you walk on! No wonder that Mr. Daddy was happy!

Finally, Mr. Daddy was happy because he had the largest, finest family of children in the world, and all girls at that. History mentions several fine families, from Cornelia down, and you may have seen some of them, but rest assured: you never saw a family of children equal to his! How many there were of these lovely, ragged, bare-footed little girls, I do not know. They were much, much more numerous than the dogs. I know this, because each girl boasted of owning half a dog. You see what an aggravating situation I am in: if I knew how many dogs there were, I should know how many girls there were, and if I knew how many girls, I should know how many dogs. I tried to count those girls many

times. I stepped up on the back porch and surveyed the universe of calico dresses, dusty feet, brown legs and arms, tawny faces, and hanging hair. I then commenced painfully to count by eights, turning down a finger for each octet, but soon my head began to swim, and the immediate landscape became a mere blur of girl and dog. I choked back my tears, feeling that arithmetic would yet ruin me and wishing that I were a simple astronomer. When, years later, I got into unknown quantities in algebra, I solved triumphantly every problem, but I never succeeded in figuring out the number of those girls.

Nor is it likely that Mr. and Mrs. Daddy knew how many children they had. Indeed, the three youngest, the babies, had no names. Mr. Daddy said that they were on the waiting list, and if you want to know what he meant by that, I can tell you.

The girls were named after the States of the Union. Every name of a State which had a dash of femininity about it was utilized, but Mr. and Mrs. Daddy drew the line at the Territories. Hence the waiting list. I understand now the neighbors' laughing comment on Mr. Daddy's pretended wrath at the slowness of the administration at Washington. He affected to clamor for the admission of Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, Dakota. He favored admitting at once all these Territories, saying that he needed leeway, whatever he meant by that. The adjournment of Congress loosed about the Daddy farm, along the road and at the village store, a flood of jocose indignation.

It is of course impossible for me to recall the names of more than a limited number of those lovely girls. I remember, however, romping with Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Texas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Arkansas, and Tennessee. There were many more, it seems to me. Virginia was the oldest. It will be noticed that Massachusetts was the only girl from New England.

The touch of perfection in this charming family lay in the fact that the oldest children seemed to be no older than the average. They still made dolls of corn husks, played in the sand and dust, tripped the rope, danced like fairies when their daddy twanged the guitar of an evening under the elm tree, or hoppity-skipped down to the spring, singing tra-la-la with the five-year-olds. Their hands and feet were no browner than those of their younger sisters, nor their hearts less tender.

Nor did Mr. Daddy appear much older than his flock. He wore, it is true, a long, silky beard, but that did not add to his age, which seemed to have stopped at ten years. His potatoes, corn, pumpkins, melons grew of their own accord, hence he had lots of time, either about the house, or down at the "branch", or wandering through the woods. His triumph was to take his guitar, start a jolly dance tune, stamp his way with exaggerated movements toward the elm tree, and see his dusky darlings follow, keeping time. There they danced, waving their arms, striking the grass with noiseless feet. While



dancing, they neither spoke nor laughed, but moved silently, like young foxes playing in the forest. When he stopped playing, they trooped about him, clamoring for more, and the dogs, which had been bounding and running about during the dance, commenced to bark joyously. Mr. Daddy gave way before the popular appeal, and many times joined the frolic, playing and dancing at once.

Nearly every Saturday afternoon I danced with these charming little savages, or played with them behind the house or among the scattered trees of the orchards. You may suppose that, since I was the only boy, they received me with some of the honors due to Solomon. Error! Both girls and dogs treated me just like one of themselves.

My first question on arriving was usually: "Where is Tennessee?"

Tennessee was probably about seven, but seemed neither younger nor older than her sisters. Perhaps her eyes were a shade blacker, her tiny hand seemed somewhat more authoritative. And such a hand! Later, at various periods, I have thought myself an expert in hands, but I have never seen one more worthy of marble. Its beauty was too great for bronze or ivory, and matched the perfection of her valiant brown arm. What a pleasure it was to cut my foot, then feel her motherly little arm around my neck while she dried my tears, and see her prepare and apply a poultice of mud and plantain leaves!

One sunny afternoon I started for Mr. Daddy's

place. As I drew near, I was surprised to see neither girls nor dogs, to hear not the slightest sound. The doors were closed, and Oh! the desolate, shut windows! With a frightened voice, I called: "Tennessee! where are you, Tennessee?" There was no reply; then I knew that they were gone, that I should never see her again, for if she had been there, she would have answered me.

I sat down on the edge of the porch. In the dust were visible as usual the multitudinous tracks of children and dogs. I could see near the end of the bare trodden earth, where the grass began, the rectangle which she and I had marked off as "our farm" the last time we had played together. She always preferred to be on the outskirts, and I shared her taste. Finally, I noticed the print of wheels close to the porch in the hard earth. I ran to the barn: the horses were gone, the cow was gone—they had evidently all gone! I returned to the porch and looked into the windows. The rooms had been neatly swept and washed, and were entirely empty. I should never see good Mrs. Daddy there again, nor Tennessee, nor any of her sisters, nor the dear dogs, nor Mr. Daddy! I have never felt such an impression of desolation in any human dwelling, not even the afternoon which some years later I elected to pass in the empty Gillis mansion, said by all reputable people to be haunted.

What month was it when Tennessee disappeared? Probably in September, for I remember that the persimmons in the tree by the gate had turned gold-

en. I sat for a long time on the edge of the porch. Finally, a chipmunk ran out from under the house, paused an instant to look at me with insolence, scampered up a tree, and began to bark at me. A terror seized me; I started for home, sobbing as I ran.

I lay down in the warm hay on the sunny side of one of our hay-stacks, and probably cried myself to sleep, for when I heard mama calling supper, it was after sundown. I washed my face at the well and entered the presence of the family.

Fortunately for me, we had a guest, a hardy blue-shirted farmer from Clay County. I soon found myself listening to what he was saying, especially when he commenced to tell a long story of a sad event which had taken place in his district fifteen years before: the death of a young bride of two months. She was the most beautiful girl in Clay County, and had selected her husband from among forty suitors. He gave a long description of her, of her parents and grand-parents, and traced the family through Kentucky back to Virginia. He then described the farm where she was born and the farm where she and her husband had gone to live. I became more and more interested.

When the stranger had finished this part of his story and was about to take up the history of the family of the bridegroom, papa said: "In the midst of life, we are in death." Then there commenced a conversation which made a deep impression on me. My parents did most of the talking, while our guest

devoted his energies to the supper, until growing astonishment suspended his activities.

Mama maintained, with an eloquence which increased as she spoke, that there were worse things for a woman than to die young and beautiful.

"Take the case of the poor young bride. She will always be remembered as she was and as you, after fifteen years, described her — rosy and beautiful, sweet-tempered and kind. If she had lived, she might have become old, homely, and perhaps crabbed. There would possibly have been misunderstandings with her neighbors, or even with her husband. There might have been quarrels. Then, too, she might have been sickly, thin — thin as a rail —"

"Or fat," interrupted papa.

"Too fat even — immense," said mama.

"Stoop-shouldered —"

"Gray haired —"

"Bald —"

"Rheumatic —"

"Neuralgic —"

"Afflicted with quinsy —"

"With a hacking cough —"

"Toothless, or nearly so —"

"Sharp-chinned —"

"With bristles —"

"Watery-eyed —"

"Grisly-faced —"

"Pinch-nosed —"

"Afflicted with divers maladies —"

The stranger from Clay County sat as if petrified

with his fork in the air. As for me, I felt such a horror that my hair seemed to stand on end. Was this the close of a normal life? Would Tennessee become like that? Was it for the best that she had been snatched from me in the flower of her beauty? Would her sisters too become hags and the dogs decrepit shadows? And Mr. and Mrs. Daddy, what would they become? I could eat nothing more. The flame of the lamp seemed to be sinking under the green shade. I fixed staring eyes on the darkest corner of the room, and saw come slowly out of the shadows a dance of grisly hags, where I recognized the distorted, hideous forms and faces of Virginia, Massachusetts, Georgia, Kentucky and—to me—innumerable others. But there were two little figures which danced face to face, their brown arms tossing in the air, their eyes fixed on each other. And still they danced, forever and forever children, and one of them was beautiful. Nor has any effort of the imagination aided by silent forests or distant cities or shuddering midnights, ever enabled me to age by one hour that sweet face or that tiny form. Since I thus profit by a puissant mirage, it is my hope, O Tennessee, that by this time your eyes have been touched by the greater magic which passeth all understanding, and that from a safe resting place you behold your sisters and me, dancing, eternally young, to the tune of your Daddy's guitar.

#### IV. THE GHOST OF THE WHITE COW

Oh! the ghosts of my childhood! How efficient they were, how numerous, how varied! Commenc-

ing with the dead zone of twilight, they occupied every chance yard of space that lent itself to the imagination. They flitted half invisible through thick walls and oaken doors, and lingered, evanescent yet palpable, in the open gaps of things. The cellar contained several of them, as did the attic; the parlor and the winding halls knew them, not alone at night, but on still summer afternoons when the house was empty; and in the hours of pitchy blackness the orchard and the forest were full of them. These were the times when the word *ghost* had an h in it, when its plural — at least in the language of us boys and girls — was *ghostses*, and when the word *haunt* was pronounced to rhyme with *pant*, which is its proper pronunciation. Those were the times when children had an opportunity to be well balanced. Now-a-days, there are so many fairies that the children have all run to the soft. They know nothing of the manly, vigorous, intense, grisly, real side of the universe. Where have the devils gone? What has become of the ghosts?

Ghosts! Whatever imagination I possess is due to them — that is, if they be made to include the devils as they properly should — and I revere and love them with an august reverence, with a terrible love! Take the case of the ghost of the white cow. As far as I can see moonlight, I can see her. I know her better than you ever knew any living cow (to speak your language). I know her noble forehead and graceful horns, I know every hair on her, every swish of her tail, every thought in her honest eyes,

every intonation of her cavernous voice, every motion of her generous mother heart. I know her as if I had manufactured her. I know her and I love her.

But I must not let passion run away with me!

I conjure with a half century of time. I wing to-night a prodigious flight. I leave gray hairs and the burden of accumulated disappointments. I people again my parents' house with tender figures. I am a child of four on a wintry, moonlit night, and mama has tucked me into my trundle bed with hands of infinite affection. Now she has left her baby with a final caress of his brown curls. He is alone in the big room. A full, red, melancholy rising moon makes the pearly panes glitter. The little boy turns toward the window a frightened but resolute face. He holds his breath. He listens to every sound. The question he asks himself is: "When will *they* come?" But *they*, my good listeners, does not mean, as you suppose, the ghosts: he knows that the ghosts are already there, — that they are always there. The *they* of whom he thinks are the group of villagers who come Saturday night, at the close of the long week, to pass the evening with Joseph and Jane, to relate indifferent gossip, and, finally, — Oh! finally! — to tell of disembodied spirits that did walk the earth. They sit about the flaming fireplace. The women knit or sew, while the rough bearded pioneers whittle pine sticks with their sharp jack-knives. After the tales of adventure with wild beasts and Indians, some one is sure to commence a ghost story. Then other ghost stories

follow, each more gruesome than the last. The voices sink lower, sometimes to a whisper, until in the hush one hears the ticking of the clock, the snapping of the fire, the raging of the wind.

What tellers of ghost stories those men and women were! How their favorite stories betrayed their characters! I salute you, O dead pioneers, defenders of innocence, avengers of broken vows, resurrectors of pale brides and ancient dames and of young mothers departed before their time, transfigurers of those despitely used and foully done to death, haters of step-mothers and step-fathers, nullifiers of forged wills, persuaders of the sepulchre, movers of disembodied spirits, unsealers of ghastly lips, cornerers of the long-since dead, diviners of family secrets, masters of poison, pistols, and daggers, architects of charnel horrors, freezers of the blood, limners of frosty-chinned old men and of sharp-nosed witches, lauders of perished beauties, consolers of the unconsolated, dryers of tears, caressers of the uncaressed, stillers of sobs, holders of the celestial balances, symnombulists of justice! I salute you, O dead pioneers, for I remember your eloquence, and I have not heard it equalled among learned men. You alone knew how to turn the earth backward into the mystery of ancient times. You excelled in making out of moonlight a robe of horror and out of night the cerements of madness. You it was who knew how to garb a ghost, to describe the trailing of its diaphanous garments, to imitate its mouse-like shriek and the howling of the death-dog



in the night, to make us hear the scraping of a cypress branch against an affrighted window, or the creak of doom when the untouched and bolted door turned on its hinges. You made us feel sudden, inexplicable currents of air, the trailing across our faces of damp tresses, the approach of a hand that traversed raiment and flesh to close like ice about the heart beneath. You taught our ears to hear footfalls fainter than the sound of a gossamer thread alighting upon a lake. You made us see eyes that could no longer weep, and, in the frosty air, breath that was not breath, from lips that were not lips.

Such were the visions, such the imaginings that filled with fascinating terror the wide open eyes of the little boy. And so it used to be that when the neighbors had arrived, he slipped out of bed, wrapped himself in his mama's shawl, stole down stairs, and squeezed himself between the bottom stair and the sitting-room door. Oh! how cold it was, in spite of his flannel gown and his mama's shawl!

Now, on a night of nights, after Mr. Beach had told a harrowsome tale of a one-legged ghost, whose leg could be heard thumping as he walked, the little boy heard his papa commence in his soft voice the most wonderful ghost story ever told. It seemed more human than any other ghost story for it concerned a cow. It related how a white cow which we had once owned had disappeared one night and had never been seen again. One bitterly cold moonlight night, grandpa had been awakened by a lowing, had got up, and had seen the ghost of the white cow

standing by the stable door, and her calf from within was answering her mother's lowing.

The story was so piteous that the little boy found himself crying. His tears might at any moment become sobs. He slipt noiselessly upstairs. Arrived there, he heard an unmistakable lowing. It was soft, tender, insistent yet helpless,—a lowing as before bars that were never to be let down. Could it be that our lost cow had returned? Was she out in the bitter cold? In an instant, the small figure, stumbling in its long gown and trailing shawl, was at the window, and there he saw, he saw, in the frosty light of the desolate moon, against the tortured background of the forest,—he saw the ghost of the white cow! And the wind did not make her tail move, and no vapor arose from her nostrils nor from her cavernous mouth when she raised her head to low, and a calf answered from the barn. Shivering with horror and pity, the little boy rushed to his trundle bed, buried himself under the covers, and wept and sobbed for what seemed to him hours and days and years.

When he awakened in the sunny morning, his mama was caressing him playfully and calling him endearing names. The ghost was gone. It did not reappear the next night, nor the night thereafter, nor ever again. For many nights, the little boy watched at the window, and finally his mama caught him there in the cold. But he clung to her in such a tempest of sobbing that she could not scold him. Instead, she hurried him into his bed, placed a warm

soapstone at his feet, and tried to console him. Finally, when he could speak, he answered her questions: "Oh! mama, it was the cow! It was the ghost!"

"Why! what do you mean, my little darling?"

"It was the ghost, the ghost of the cow!"

"What cow?"

"The good cow that was stoled away by mean men or devils and they eated her up and her ghost came back 'cause she wanted her calf."

"And what did she do?"

"She just stood in the cold and mooed by the barn, and I heard her calf answer."

"When?"

"Lots of nights ago."

"What was the color of the cow?"

"White, mama, all white."

It was mama who was all white now! She ran to the door and called: "Joseph! Joseph! come quick!"

Among our cows there was none that was white. Here is what happened: I became in an instant the pride of the family. In twenty-four hours, I was the sensation of the village, I was its idol, I was famous. I was the diaphanous soul, the precious intermediary between two worlds. There were daily and nightly sessions at our house. Gentlemen in black and ladies in silk journeyed from ten miles or more to see me. They produced on me an unfortunate impression that life was to be one joyous picnic, for they gave me candy, cakes, and playthings. The silken lady rustled into an easy chair,

drew me to knees which seemed leagues under the swelling dress, kissed and caressed me fondly, called me the most marvelous child she had ever seen, and then said (they all said the same thing): "Tell me, dear, tell me of the ghost of the white cow!" And then I opened my mouth and told her, then I told her husband and her brother and her cousins and her aunts and her envious children. I told them with joy and pride and with an increasing luxury of detail. The nap never wore off my story. My cow became daily and nightly more beautiful, more intelligent, more perfect,—in short, a better and better cow.

For the first two or three days, my triumph was equally conspicuous when I walked down the street, holding my proud mama by the hand. The moment I appeared, nothing else was visible. No one paid any attention to the lines of immigrant wagons with horses and dogs trailing on behind, or to the cow-boys with their costly saddles and decorated hats, the traveling dentist, the shouting auctioneer, the stranger within our gates, the village preacher, the politician, the judge on his circuit, the passing desperado. But alas for human glory! after a while my public wearied of me. Offended, I decided to cease repeating my story before an ungrateful world. One night, as I was falling asleep, I said: "Mama, I not tell any more the story of the ghost, 'cept just to you and papa. . ."

### Three Poems

By MARY WILLIS SHUEY

#### WELCOME

The train must be late.  
There is an uncertainty in waiting for a train  
That comes in at dusk.  
And waiting for *her*, the girl their son is to marry.

She will notice everything.  
And the house is old-fashioned—they know it,  
But when you've grown up in a house  
Associations count more than styles.  
Carpets on the floor: furniture not old enough to be  
    antique,  
Not new enough to be modern.  
Things they had when they were first married.  
Even enlarged pictures on the wall.  
And *she* — this girl their son is to marry —  
She has had different surroundings.  
She may think them queer, for there is nothing in  
    him that reflects this.

The lights on. She is coming.

And she sees only the love in their eyes,  
And a picture of a little boy in kilts  
Smiling at her from behind a bowl of red dahlias.

## BLUE AND WHITE

She had a quilt all cut for her to piece  
In tiny, even squares of white and blue,  
It was all planned, all cut, all ready there,  
And very little left for her to do.

But all her life was made in blue and white,  
And every block exactly like the rest.  
She knew just how the quilt was meant to look,  
There never was a puzzle to be guessed.

And so she came to look, half envious,  
At those who cut their own blocks, without plan,  
She longed to put in reds and greens and blacks,  
To slash and slay the quilt that she began.

She made a quilt that all the world admired,  
All tiny, even squares of blue and white,  
When all her life she wanted crazy-quilts,  
But never could be sure that they were *right*.

## RE-DEAL

They have been married more than thirty years,  
And now they find themselves alone once more,  
Alone, with Time to do with as they please,  
To play the games they could not play before.

The things they thought they would find time for  
when

There were few cares, the children all were grown,  
Have faded with the passing of the years,  
They do not want to play them now — alone.

They deal the cards half-heartedly again  
To play a game of seven-up or rum,  
Dealing once more the little pasteboard days  
In hands in which the high trumps never come.

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### Free

By MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

After the day's brute toil is done,  
And the distress,  
I shall lie in the grave and stretch out my arms  
For weariness.

And no one shall call me to love or duty;  
No one shall care, and I shall be,  
From joy and hurt and hope and beauty,  
As the stones and the clay that crowd me, free.

## Lintels of the Sun

By RAY BENNETT WEAVER

I am lonely on my hill,  
I have gathered many flowers;  
But the moments tarry still,  
Tarry still the weary hours.

Did you smile but to deceive  
Grief that trampled in your heart?  
If you did then I must grieve,  
Grieve and weep and so depart.

Were you happy but to say  
Words that paused within my ear?  
If you were I must away,  
Far away nor linger here.

Is it that the lily fades  
Where the rose is spread in bloom?  
Let me then seek valley shades,  
Valley shades and valley gloom.

Shall I sit upon my hill,  
Weeping through the weary hours?  
Shall I linger lonely still?  
I have gathered many flowers.



## The Effigy

By JULIA COOLEY

I was not beautiful before,  
But you cast the ecstasy of your glance upon me,  
And I became beautiful, responsdently.  
In your eyes was the flaming certainty of my perfectness,  
And, lo, in the fire of your satisfaction  
I grew, like a flower ripening in the sun.  
From your eyes my eyes caught summer.  
From your lips my lips drew passionate pride.  
You perused my face,  
And all the lines of it, the contours even  
Shifted to meet the ideality of your gaze,  
You and happiness the sculptors.  
You touched my hair,  
And it exulted goldenly beneath your palm.  
You laid your hand upon my shoulder,  
Remarking, with fair comment, the grace of my body,  
And, lo, I became graceful  
And rejoiced in every limb.  
You met my spirit with your soul,  
And worshiped it,  
And, lo, I became the sanctuary  
Which your soul's utterance declared me.  
I was not beautiful before. —  
Your concept of me planted faith,  
And faith gave flower to beauty!

## Sanctuary

By AGNES MARY BROWNELL

Thirty years ago, Miss Delie Worthing and her sister, Miss Hannie, lived in a little frame band-box of a house within easy walking distance of the Public School, built fortwise upon a hill. Miss Delie taught in the school; Miss Hannie had taught at an earlier period, but she had never achieved anything beyond a country school. When Miss Delie came to town to teach, Miss Hannie accompanied her; the two sisters had always been peculiarly congenial. In their country school teaching days they had always endeavored to secure schools in neighboring districts, and had sometimes been enabled to board at the same place. Their parents were gone now; their brother James ran the gaunt home place, and he was married to a very capable and driving little woman who regarded her husband's older sisters with a pity bordering on contempt, as old maid school-teachers. Mrs. James had left school early, without troubling to secure an education beyond the most primitive knowledge of letters and figures; but she had acquired a home, a husband, and a sturdy young family.

Miss Delie and Miss Hannie had settled down in town in a sort of naïve spirit of adventure. They had no feeling of strangeness; it was a small town — the county seat — and they had known it always,

coming in on Saturdays in the big farm wagon, trading thriftily in the stores, and visiting their country neighbors on the sidewalks and in shifting door-ways. Now all that was past—the morning bustle of setting off—the chores after night, on their return; even the gala afternoons had lost their first fine rapture. Miss Delie and Miss Hannie had arrived at that dull station of life marked ‘middle age.’

Miss Delie taught, and Miss Hannie kept the band-box. They had brought their share of their mother’s possessions from the home place—the best room carpet woven in a hit-and-miss design, that had been kept in shuttered fadelessness; the kitchen cupboard with its doors inset with painted tin, pricked into a pattern of stars and circles; their mother’s bed, in which she had died; and stores of ancient bedding. For these things, James’s wife did not care; she had new, yellow, varnished furniture, and a parlor rug in scrolls.

While Delie prepared for school in the mornings, arranging her brown crimped hair smoothly on either side of a faultless part, and donning the brown cloth school dress with its basque adorned with velvet lapels, and a path of buttons down the front, Hannie, in stiff percale faded to a plaster gray, got the breakfast. While her sister kept her school-room in a sort of droning order, Hannie marshalled all those old speaking possessions that had been their mother’s into a shining semblance of very newness. In her girlhood she had wrought tirelessly

over tub and ironing-board and broom, and even in the field; now that her field was more contracted, she still put in every minute, achieving a sort of fierce cleanliness. At noon, the old round table, its slim legs depending beneath the starched points of the table cloth that was like a bit of sculptured drapery, steamed and shone and glittered, set for the modest feast. By noon, a red patch lay high up upon the slightly sallow cheek of Miss Delie; it made her look curiously younger. Miss Hannie hated the red patch. She got into a way of delaying dinner a little, suggesting casually that her sister lie down until it was ready. It was hard for Miss Hannie, long schooled in the tradition of the early country dinner, to retard the hour; her dinner would get done, in spite of her efforts; but she would set it fiercely to one side. Sometimes Miss Hannie's excellent dinners were a little dry.

Some afternoons, Miss Hannie, flushed and heated from her cooking, forced Miss Delie to remain on the couch; and struggling into her blue wool that was like a cuirass with its lining of silesia, the stitched stays of its waist, and the buckram that stiffened its hem, after the fashion of the day, herself stepped into the harness and heard Miss Delie's classes. Miss Hannie did not like teaching school. She had a short, sharp, snappy little manner that was entirely unlike Miss Delie's motherly, sympathetic one. Perhaps Miss Hannie's mothering and sympathy were all taken up with Miss Delie.

On Saturdays and Sundays they sometimes went

with James out to the old place. James's wife had sharp eyes. "They'll go like your mother," she told her husband.

"Who — the girls?" he derided. "Nothing the matter — why, I thought Delie looked quite bloom-in'."

His wife gave a little scream — "Delie . . . she's the worst!"

One summer vacation they closed up the band-box, and went to stay at the farm. Hannie was sure that her sister would recuperate with the rest and the open air. She called it 'get back her strength'. James was clumsily kind; James's wife, Ellie, was kind too, in a brisk, busy, pitying fashion; but that did not prevent her confiding one day to a visitor how trying it was to have to put up with an invalid in the house. In time the words came to Miss Delie's and Miss Hannie's ears.

By September, Miss Delie was so much better that they went back to the band-box, and the old round began. Those lined and stayed and buckramed dresses of Miss Delie's grew into wrinkly folds about her shoulders, and sagged strangely in the skirt; and Miss Hannie spent more and more time concocting good, strengthening food. Miss Delie's waves lost their old-time crispness, and lay flat and lusterless, looped like dark, parted curtains across her transparent temples; and the red patch stayed and widened — or was it that the thin cheek grew less?

There came a noon when Miss Delie did not re-

turn to the school, and even Miss Hannie's fierce courage could not extend to leaving her. A pretty girl from the high school room went down to substitute until another teacher could be found. Thirty years ago they were not so particular as today, but manifestly Miss Delie had heard her last class.

So the two of them kept to the little house, crowded with their possessions and their mother's, heated to sultriness, close shut against the sharp air that provoked increasing paroxysms of coughing in Miss Delie, and even a dry and hacking cough behind her hand from Miss Hannie.

And then, stealthily at first, and afterwards boldly, Miss Hannie began to take in sewing; for she knew how terrifyingly small was their little balance. When she sewed she had not time for the daily exercise of that passion of hers for cleanliness. Miss Hannie sewed rapidly and tightly, fiercely conscious of the dust on the books and the chair legs, and the ragged edge of the scalloped paper on the shelves.

It came to be that she was much up with her sister at night. After such nights, she found she was not fit to sew. Once she made a terrible mistake in a dress; she said nothing, but went and bought more goods; it took much of her profit. After all her labor, which had even entailed some little neglect of her sister, she had practically given it away.

There were a few days during which she nerved herself to talk to James. She knew it meant but one thing. James had only one thing to offer — a home.

Those were the early, bad years; a home and the meagre living was all James himself had.

James was honestly dumfounded. He had never received a monthly wage. He thought the girls had 'put by' the proceeds from their teaching. He had even on occasion had recourse to them for small sums to meet some delayed payment for farming implements and the like. He said awkwardly — "Sure — sure — it's your home whenever you say."

"And I can help Ellie!" put in Miss Hannie, eagerly. She did not say, as she had said that summer — "It's just till Delie gets her strength back." She knew and James knew, as James's wife had known all along, that Delie would go the way her mother went.

"As if I needed her help!" said James's wife agrievedly to another visitor; "with Hettie coming on sixteen, and the rest from under foot! That's what comes of school-teaching — if the girls had married —"

But she moved the varnished yellow furniture out of the spare room, and made way for the old dark wood dresser with its carven wood handles that simulated leaves, and its square dim mirror that had reflected the faces of an older generation; for the bed from which the girls' and James's mother had gone her way; and all that ancient store of bed clothes; for the treasured carpet, woven of old blue and white rags that had been their apparel. Ellie meant to be kind to the sisters, though she could not help but reflect upon their short-sightedness — after all their learning to come to this.

"To come onto us!" she said to herself; "I never had a day's schooling after fifteen, and now I got a home and a husband and children — and the girls, they got their education."

James drove in to bring his sisters out in the fine, two-seated surrey. Delie's flat, lifeless hair which she no longer crimped lifted a little from her sunken temples in the breeze of their going. Both sisters were dressed with their usual exquisite care in their fine old clothes. The beaded passamenterie trimming on their basques had a rich and alien glitter, and their thin and corded necks were swathed in ruching. Delie wore her gold watch and chain; the chain, caught at her flat chest with a jeweled slide, looped in a lavish length of golden links.

James drew in his team as they approached the river, which was very low; it promised to be another dry summer. The bridge echoed hollowly; far below lay the flat surface of the water, like a plate of glass. Miss Delie spoke, leaning out her white face from the rods that supported the canopy. "It looks like coffin-glass," she said.

"Sho!" exclaimed James. "It looks like water, and it is." To himself he thought: "She's getting notional just like mother — she'll go the way mother went."

"It looks still and peaceful," said Miss Hannie, striving to divert her sister from her sick fancy; and she drew up her sister's thin black shawl with its edge of raised embroidery.

"Still and peaceful," mused Miss Delie; and then



they were over the bridge, and James had started up the team. His place was only a mile further on. They were there too soon. Ellie came out and helped them down; she had on a new gingham which she had made in her scant periods of leisure, and she noted with a sort of pitying resentment the sisters' attire. The sixteen-year-old Hettie who was already 'keeping company', went upstairs with them, carrying water to fill their pitcher. Hetty shared her mother's opinion, that an education amounted to very little; and the spectacle of the two old helpless sisters was not conducive to a broader view. She went down stairs presently, and took up her sewing — it was a pink waist — humming happily, thinking of when she would wear it, and where, and with whom. . . . Hannie came down after a time, when she had got Delie to lie down; but Ellie and Hetty assured her that there was nothing just then to do — supper was ready, all except the putting on.

Delie would rather not have come down, and Hannie would gladly have taken her supper up to her — but both sisters felt that this was not the way to begin the new existence; so they came down together at the call. Neither was hungry, but Hannie forced herself to eat. She must eat if she was to work. The bread trembled in Delie's thin hand, and the spoon shook. "You ain't eating nothing!" complained Ellie, sharply. "Do you feel you would relish some preserve?" She began to rise.

"O no — no!" hastily interposed Delie; "I'm doing

very well." And she resolutely buttered and swallowed a bit of bread.

"Delie's a little tired tonight," apologized Hannie. "A night's rest will fix her up." She knew, and James knew, and Ellie and Hetty knew — but if Delie knew, she never said — that no night's rest nor delicate food could stay her sister from going the way their mother went.

Delie kept much to the room of their own old furnishings; and Hannie stayed as much as might be with her. She was fiercely resolved that her own hands should do at least the work of the two, and that Ellie should not feel anything beyond their mere presence as an added burden. To this end she helped with the washing and the ironing and the cooking and cleaning, to such effect that she felt it no imposition to prepare some delicacy for her sister, or to serve her in their room after a bad night. She perceived with a sort of unbelieving anger, that her own strength played her curious tricks. Sometimes she had hastily to sit down, for a sort of melting dizziness in her limbs. The little old hacking cough that she had been used to conceal behind her hand, grew more insistent. And curiously, a strange and traitorous thought used sometimes to assail her, looking at Ellie lording it in the kitchen over James and the rest, and Hetty, blooming into the impalpable beauty that is youth — that life and books had cheated her and Delie. She tried to dismiss it as treachery to Delie. After all, she had not been really clever — not like Delie. Perhaps Delie had

got something out of it — something that she would not even have exchanged for Ellie's self-sufficiency or Hetty's bloom.

Ellie had trained vines over the front porch, coarse, flaunting-leaved vines whose twisted stems had a ropy look. These thickly growing, ropy vines made a sort of twilight about the door. One day Ellie came to the door with a departing visitor, a country neighbor, whose voice came sepulchraly from the depths of a straw plaited sun-bonnet; the neighbor finished her sentence in the porch . . .  
“the way her mother went.”

They did not know that Delie was sitting far back in the green twilight of the porch till they heard her voice, high, and a trifle husky — “I heard what you said, Mrs. Forman, and I am *not* going like my mother!”

“For the land's sake!” ejaculated the neighbor. “You there, Delie — I never meant — I never said — I never went to say —” she floundered unintelligibly. Ellie stood holding the door wide open, although it was fly time. Suddenly Hannie appeared out of nowhere. “Deny it to her if you can!” accused Delie's shrill, reedy voice. Hannie did not wait for accusation nor denial. “Go — go!” she urged the sun-bonneted neighbor. “Well, I declare!” said the woman, her great face going a blowsy red; she stalked stiffly down the bricked path.

That night in their room, in their mother's bed, Delie broached the great solution. She had stated

many a problem in her time, and she was not to be thwarted by this one. Hannie sat up in a sudden startled terror. She thought her sister had gone out of her mind. But Delie had never seemed saner. It was as if she stated a problem, and indicated the steps of its solution, as she had done so many, many times in the old days. The sisters had a very little money left, which they were encroaching upon daily — there was the tonic, there was the wine, there were occasional doctor's visits — presently there would be none left; their mother had been a long time going; and they would have to come upon Ellie and James for the —

"Yes — yes — I understand," whispered Hannie.

This way there would be enough of their own, and they could go together.

"It would be wicked!" shuddered Hannie, always the softer of the two beneath her brisk, driving ways.

"It would be just and right," pronounced Delie, in her old, dominant manner.

"Let's sleep now," soothed Hannie; "and not talk any more about it."

"Will you think about it?" insisted Delie.

Hannie promised; how could she help but think? Now she had not only to care for her sister, but to watch her with a strange, new vigilance.

A strange alteration took place in the sisters; Delie gained in strength and spirit, and in proportion as her strength increased, Hannie's flagged. Two great, crescent wrinkles ringed her mouth; her nose had a pinched look; her eyes seemed to keep

sleepless vigil. But daily over her face there came a look of unwilling yielding. Ellie translated this look to her husband — "She's a-giving up, Hannie is — Delie's resigned to go the way her mother went, and Hannie's coming to it!"

Ellie had her own troubles that summer. Byron, the older boy, having finished his meagre country schooling, wanted to go to school in town that winter. James secretly abetted him, but Ellie thought he ought to help with the farm. She flared out upon him one night at supper; it had been a hard day — she had not sat down, except for those grudging moments of eating. The shoulders of her faded blue percale were wet through; her hair, which had been soft brown and curly, now had a grizzled look.

"Look at me!" burst out Ellie, in shrill reproach. "When did I ever go to school in town? Here I stay slaving for you young ones, and the first chance you want to get away! Schoolin' ain't what pays — nothin' pays but work. I should think you'd want to work and be independent!" Her voice held shrilly on the last word.

James shuffled apologetically; Byron looked sullenly down at his plate; Delie cast a swift look at Hannie, and there was triumph in that look. But they all continued to eat; they were there for the purpose of eating, and there was no time to waste.

Presently James and Byron got up silently, and silently went out. The younger children had already finished, and could be heard quarreling beneath the window. Hetty was going to some coun-

try festivity; she had on the pink waist, and her face was charming with the exquisite modeling of youth. Her mother regarded her with a sort of shamed pride. She was so tired that she allowed herself to sit there, scarcely eating, scarcely thinking; if she consciously thought anything, she was seeing Hetty glowing pinkly in the midst of some boisterous country jollity.

Hannie had spoken; she asked for the bread. She did not want bread; her throat felt choked; but she had an odd feeling of discountenancing Delie by continuing to eat. The bread plate stood at Ellie's right; Ellie, in her distraction of weariness, did not hear the request; if she was conscious that Hannie had spoken, she thought it some trivial observation. She continued to sit, her grizzled, untidy hair fringing her damp shoulders, sunk in a pleasant, vicarious dream of Hetty.

That night Hannie no longer refused to listen. The two sisters, scarcely beyond middle age, but relegated by reason of helplessness, sickness, and dependence, to a tragic tale of years, were again in their old accord. They never doubted that Ellie had meant them, when she had charged Byron to be independent; nor that she had grudged the pitiful slice of bread. Now that they were agreed, they made their plans with all their old timely precision.

The sisters had a store of yellowed muslins, their fine, embroidered edgings set with careful hand-work. Hannie gradually and secretly incorporated

these into the weekly washings; and Delie, who had never cared for sewing, worked avidly, setting their clothes in order — a fresh ruche here, a ripped stitching there, a loosened braid. . . . Finally, all was set to rights.

The last night, when the house was still, they rose and dressed themselves with something more than the old care; it was as if they dressed for a rite. They wore their best; but all their other careful attire lay whole and fresh in drawers, or hung methodically from closet hooks. As they turned at the door for a last look, they saw the room in a strange perfection of order; it was as if it were already tenantless.

They stole away in a hush of silence; not so much from fear of awaking the house, as from a sense of what was due their passing. How long they were in traversing that level mile, no one ever knew. Delie had seemed possessed of a strange strength of late, and Hannie, too, had rallied. Perhaps at the very last one of them had weakened — at least there had been a pause at the brink — the soft earth was more trodden, as if one would have turned back. But finally they had walked together down the slow shelving of the bank, stepped in together, and together lain down in that strange baptism of death. The stream was so low that as they lay the water scarcely more than covered their faces, with a curious likeness to the glass in a coffin-lid.

Hannie, who had attended her sister so many weary nights, had not failed in this last ministra-

tion. Even in her death, she had preserved that old fierce passion of hers for order; she had maintained the old inarticulate devotion to her sister; and at the cost of life had achieved independence.

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### **Weariness**

By GLENNA HUGHES PECK

The times are tired. This rose cannot unfold,  
So slow the hour goes. The earth is stale.  
Once lovely nature now grows gray and pale,  
Unlovely and unloved, ere yet are told  
E'en half of summer's days. Now turned to mould  
Are mignon spring's young leaves and blossoms  
frail,  
And trillium red as blood—too soon her grail—  
With dust and dross of other springtides rolled.

I am so weary with earth's weariness,  
That even could I sing the fairest song  
That e'er was sung, e'en then I'd droop with sleep,  
And with slow time the silent hours keep  
By this old wall, with all the flower throng  
That passed before and 'neath the soil now press.



## Light and Shade

By CHARLES G. BLANDEN

A little path we tread  
Beyond the trundlebed:  
The end that grassy mound  
Where never is a sound,  
Save that of cricket chirring,  
Or early robin stirring.

And yet, from first to last,  
Full furious and fast,  
The battles that we fight  
Bid us to muse of night  
That shows no sign of morrow —  
No cause, O friend, for sorrow;

For I do hold the world  
Is but a petal curled  
About the feet of God;  
And we who with it nod  
Are but as light and shadow  
That flit about a meadow.

## Two Poems

By AGNES KENDRICK GRAY

### NIGHT ON THE GOLDEN HORN

The young Sultàn of Dusk rides by,  
Through shadowed Stamboul of the sky —  
Past cloud-wrought mosque and minaret,  
By dark bazaar and dim serai.

His cimeter the new moon is;  
Rich-broidered robes of dreams are his,  
And as he rides, like unveiled eyes  
The stars watch from their balconies.

### PAVANE

Like a Princess of Provence  
At the Good King René's court,  
Bowing in the slow pavane,  
Lifting robe of green brocade  
O'er a silver petticoat, —  
Bows the poplar on my lawn,  
Fluttering silver-lined leaves  
In the sunset radiance.

From a rose-hung balcony  
Sings for her the mocking-bird, —  
As the troubadour of old  
Kept the measure of the dance  
With his lute and golden song,  
For the Princess of Provence  
Bowing in King René's court  
Through the stately, slow pavane.

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### Cowardice

By LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL

If there should ever come to me  
The child I long to bear,  
Grown to a woman like to me,  
Only more wise, more fair,  
May she not turn, some sudden day,  
Into the wonder-worn highway?  
Then come for instant sympathy,  
Thinking that Love had been with me?

Her young, believing eyes would search in mine  
For quick response or certain sign.

Then must there never come to me  
The child I long to bear,  
Because I dread her young belief —  
And do not dare?

## **A Little Song of Her**

By ESTHER WILLARD BATES

What shall I put into my song  
So it ring sweet and tarry long?  
The breath of love, the wind of spring,  
A dim wood road for wandering,  
And there, enchanted, lovely, slow,  
The memory of you shall go.

What shall I put into my song?  
I'll run the canticle along  
Till breezes full of butterflies  
Blow where an April orchard lies;  
Then, drifting like the petalled snow,  
Your frail and lovely wraith shall go.

But keep, ah keep, from out my song  
The heartbreak when the memories throng,  
Lest shadows come between your eyes  
And your twelve-jewelled paradise!  
Then none who hears my song shall know  
Lonely and passionate I go.

